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ABSTRACT

The Qualitative Analysis of the University of Lethbridge Teacher Education Program (QAULTEP) is designed to follow students from their admission into the university, through the education program, and into their first five years of teaching experience. Although designed initially for analysis of data, it will evolve eventually into a model for evaluating teacher education programs. The data bank has been expanded to include almost 400 variables on each of about 700 education majors. The information includes demographic data collected on admission (such as grades, courses, major, psychological test results, and English competency) and during the educational program (such as field experiences and professional semester performance, education courses, and termination status). Data on teaching success have been collected for a subset of students. (Six completed QAULTEP studies and 13 student research reports are listed. A summary of research findings is presented, together with a statement of future directions for the project.) (CTM)

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DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR THE EVALUATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

Few North American Universities are conducting longitudinal studies to evaluate their teacher education programs. QAULTEP (Qualitative Analysis of the University of Lethbridge Teacher Education Program) is an attempt to conduct such a long-term project. It is designed for the analysis of relationships among five categories of variables (pre-education, selection, training, placement, work success) and follows education students from their pre-education days through five years of teaching. The ultimate objective of QAULTEP is to develop a model for evaluating teacher education programs. A data bank has been established which to date contains approximately 400 variables on each of about 700 education students. This data bank serves as the basis for a number of studies within the QAULTEP umbrella. The following article describes the evolution of QAULTEP, its objectives, and the research that has been and is being completed within its framework.

INTRODUCTION

A major responsibility of the Faculty of Education Research Centre at The University of Lethbridge is the coordination of the evaluation of The University of Lethbridge teacher education program. The evaluation of a program involves the assessment of candidates as they enter the program, as they progress through the program, and as graduates of the program. It also necessitates the examination of various components of the program itself, and an evaluation of the degree to which the program is meeting its stated objectives. Such an undertaking requires a well-designed long-term project, a legislated commitment from the university and the Faculty of Education, and tireless support from all those involved. In a comprehensive review of the literature Enemark and Bush (1978) found only 27 longitudinal studies worthy of review. None of these traced students from the beginning of their teacher education programs through to their professional teaching careers. The University of Lethbridge QAULTEP (Qualitative Analysis of the University of Lethbridge Teacher Education Program) project is designed to follow students from their admission into the university, through the education program, and into their first five years of teaching experience. Although designed initially for analysis of data, it will evolve eventually into a model for evaluating teacher education programs.

PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

The ultimate objective of QAULTEP is the development of a model for the evaluation of teacher education programs. Specifically the project is designed to:

1) identify categories of pre-education variables which will best predict success in an education program,
2) examine changes in students (attitudinal, academic, skill development, etc.) as they progress through the program,
3) identify variables and categories of variables which are related to success within an education program,
4) identify variables and categories of variables which are related to teacher success,
5) identify characteristics of effective teachers,
6) identify characteristics of ineffective teachers,
7) identify characteristics of teachers who select themselves out of the teaching profession,
8) compare the characteristics of education students with those in the general population of students and with those entering other professions,
9) identify the most important components of a teacher education program as perceived by successful teaching graduates of the program,
10) determine the cause and effects of any differences in the evaluation procedures utilized by members of the education faculty and those used in evaluating teaching, and
11) develop a system of evaluation equally valid and reliable for evaluating success in an education program and success in the teaching profession.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF QAULTEP

QAULTEP traces its origins to 1967 when the Faculty of Education was established at the newly founded University of Lethbridge. The first official Academic Plan in 1968 established an Education Research Centre to aid in meeting the research needs of the Faculty, especially in providing liaison with the non-university professional community who were very much involved in the development of the teacher education program. QAULTEP itself originated in 1971 when the Research Centre was assigned the essential function of conducting research on selected phases of the teacher education program.

A major premise underlying the development of the Research Centre and its "essential function" was the belief that a massive undertaking such as the evaluation of a teacher education program could not succeed without a major commitment from the university, the Faculty, the Government and various teacher organizations and other agencies.

The QAULTEP project has received moral support and cooperation from The Committee on Cooperative Research on Teaching Education, a subcommittee of the Alberta Teachers' Association's Committee on Teacher Education and Certification. It has received cooperation from the Director of the Student Evaluation and Data Processing Division of The Alberta Department of Education. The commitment of the university and the Faculty of Education was reaffirmed in the Academic Plan of 1978. Individual projects have received additional funding from The Alberta Advisory Committee for Educational Studies and from The University of Lethbridge Research Fund.

Organization of the Data Bank

A data bank was created to form a basis for analyzing the data. The data bank included pre-education data (two years of arts and sciences),

education program data, scores on a battery of psychological tests designed to assess personality factors, and information obtained from the evaluation of students' language skills. The psychological tests were first administered in the spring of 1974 to students in their first education practicum, and have been required of every subsequent group of students, except for those who were admitted to the Faculty between the fall of 1976 and the fall of 1978. During that time the collection of data was temporarily suspended to allow some time for processing and analyzing data already collected.

The data bank has since expanded to include almost 400 variables on students in each of three populations which are to be used for purposes of replication and validation (see Figure 1). Individual research projects have involved the collection of other data which have been incorporated into the data bank for some sample groups of students.

Population I consists of data collected from 1972 to 1974 on 257 education students who had student teaching evaluations on the original "long evaluation form". No psychological tests were administered. Data from Population I were used to analyze relationships among variables.

Population II consists of data collected on 210 students who entered the program between the spring of 1974 and the summer of 1975. Most students completed the battery of psychological tests. Even though Population I was to have been used only for determining what relationship existed, the original "long form" for evaluating student teaching was revised on the basis of that analysis (Dravland, 1975a, 1975b) and student teachers in Population II were evaluated using the revised evaluation form.

DESCRIPTION OF QAULTEP DATA BANK

Population I
Exploratory

N = 257

Data Collected 1972-1974

Admission Data:

Teacher major (number of courses and GPA); GPA pattern; 3160 (Grade and timing); Semester Education declared

Professional Semester Performance:

Grade in Student Teaching, Ratings by University Supervisor on performance variables, Professional Semester GPA

Internship Performance:

Grade and timing (which semester)

Foundations Courses:

Grade and timing (before or after Professional Semester)

Termination:

Type and GPA

Population II
Post-Exploratory

N = 210

Data Collected 1974-1977

Admission Data:

Teaching major (number of courses and GPA); GPA pattern; 3160 (Grade, timing, performance ratings by University instructor); English Proficiency examination results; Psychological test results (16PF, CPI, D-Scale, F-Scale*, Q-Sort, TAT, MTAI, MMPI*)

* Available for only some subgroups

Professional Semester Performance:

Grade in Student Teaching, Ratings by University Supervisor on performance variable, Professional Semester GPA

Internship Performance:

Grade and timing (which semester)

Foundations Courses:

Grades and timing (before or after Professional Semester)

Termination:

Type and GPA

Population III
Hypothesis Testing

N = 207+

Data Collected 1975-1979

Admission Data - Practicum I
Performance:

Teaching major (number of courses and GPA); GPA pattern; 2160 (Grade, timing, performance ratings by University instructor); English Proficiency examination results; Psychological test results (16PF, CPI, D-Scale, F-Scale*, TAT, MTAI)

* Available for only some subgroups

Practicum II (Professional Semester I)
Performance:

Practicum III (Professional Semester II)
Performance:

Grade in Student Teaching, ratings by University Supervisor on performance variables, Professional Semester GPA

Practicum IV (Internship)
Performance:

Grade and timing (which semester)

Foundations Courses:

Grades and timing (before or after Professional Semester)

Termination:

Type and GPA

*Measures of teaching success will be collected for each population.

Figure 1

Population II is being used to confirm the relationships found in Population I, to identify other possible relationships, and to suggest hypotheses to be tested on Population III.

Population III consists of data collected on 262 students who enrolled in the "new" education program (that is, after the implementation of a pre-education field experience course) between the spring of 1975 and the spring of 1976. The psychological test battery was administered to nearly all of these students. Population III will be used to test the hypotheses formulated after analyses of Population II data.

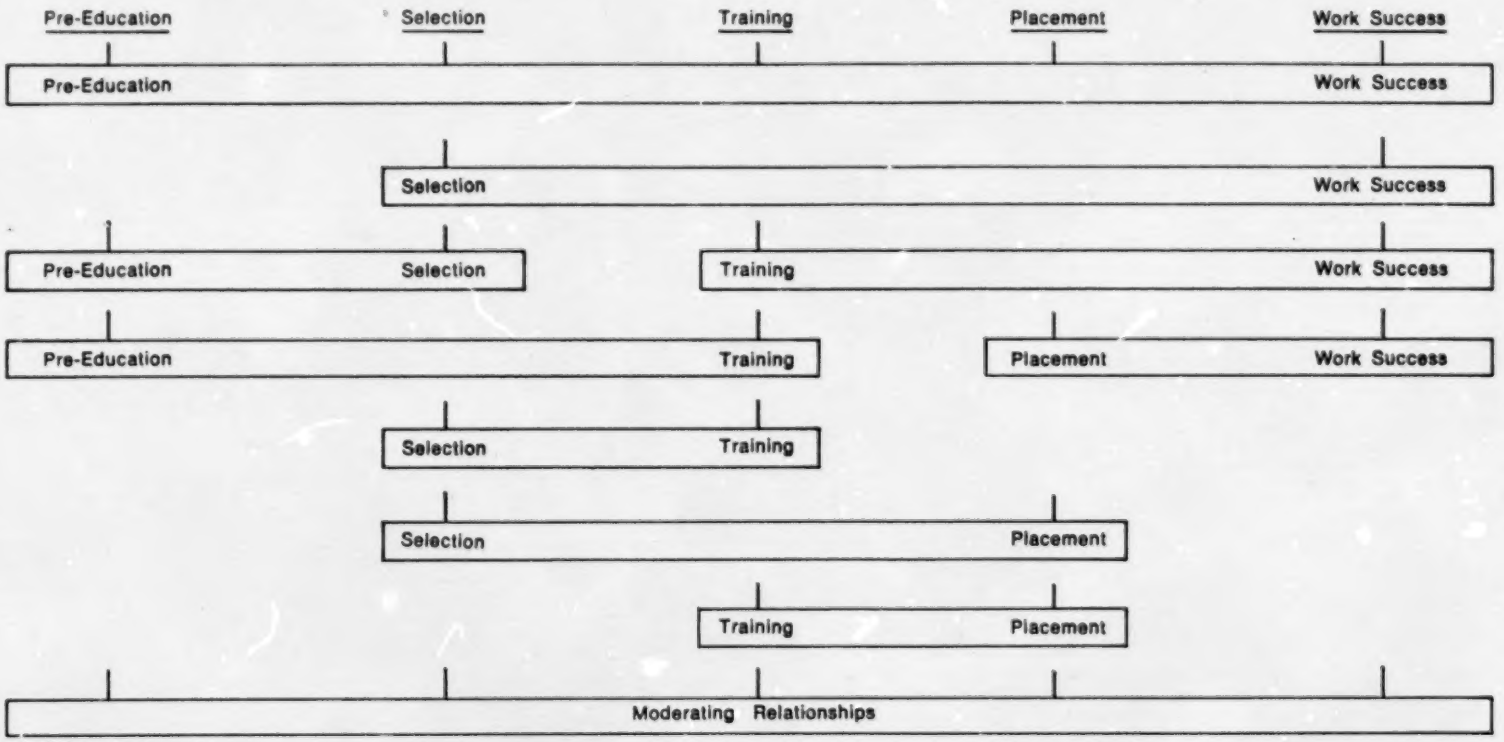
The collection of data for a fourth population was begun in the fall of 1978 and will continue until approximately 1982.

All the program-based data for Populations I, II and III have been collected. The variables include demographic data collected on admission (e.g., grades, courses, major, psychological test results, English competency assessments) and the data collected during the educational program (e.g., field experiences and professional semester performance, education courses, and termination status). In addition, data on teaching success have been collected for a subset of Population II students.

Data Analysis

To enhance understanding of the types of research to be conducted within QAULTEP, and to facilitate communication of findings to other researchers, QAULTEP studies are conducted within various inter-related categories. These categories (selection, training, placement and work success) are based on a classification by Turner (1975, p.87) with the addition for QAULTEP of the pre-education category (see Figure 2). QAULTEP was designed to follow each population of students throughout the various stages.

RELATIONSHIP AMONG FIVE CATEGORIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION



[1]Adapted from Turner (p.88) 74th Yearbook N.S.S.E.

Figure 2

RESEARCH FINDINGS

To date a total of 21 research papers examining relationships within and among QAULTEP data categories have been completed. Many of these studies were conducted under the guidance of the Coordinator of the Education Research Centre by post B.Ed. students enrolled in the Diploma Program in Education. Nine of the completed studies have dealt with variables which are part of the training category of the data base. These studies have performed the dual function of determining the comparability of Population I with Population II and examining, for example, which combination of variables recorded within the training period best account for the variance in the overall assessment of student teaching. The other studies have examined relationships between various categories.

It is not possible in a descriptive paper of this type to list the findings of these studies. However, a very brief summary of some of the more important findings may help to clarify the nature of QAULTEP and may indicate further research possibilities.

Summary of Findings

The results of the studies within the training category suggest that:

1) there was a very definite relationship between sex and each of admission GPA, major and route but not between sex and grade in student teaching,
2) the grade in student teaching was closely related to the student teacher's rating on self-concept and self-evaluation in both Populations I and II; these two variables appeared to be among the most important in the evaluation of student teaching performance,

3) several of the personal and professional attributes on the student teaching evaluation forms were significant relative to the students' major,

4) "classroom control" appeared to be one of the most important variables in determining the overall rating of success in student teaching for Populations I and II,

5) certain variables (e.g., enthusiasm and vitality, variety in approach to instruction, skill in questioning, etc.) most often were identified as those most in need of improvement by student teachers; others such as preparation, planning ability, and working with individuals were most often cited as strengths; however, there were differences noted between Populations I and II.

Very briefly, some of the findings from studies examining relationships between and among categories were:

1) admission GPA (GPA after the first two years of arts and science courses) accounted for a considerable portion of the variance in student teaching grade for Population II students but not for Population I students,

2) several of the psychological test scores (especially some of the subscales on the 16PF and CPI tests) were useful as predictors of grade in student teaching,

3) several of the psychological test scores were also useful as predictors of student teachers' ratings on "classroom control",

4) few of the ratings on individual categories of the evaluation form used in the first practicum in education were significantly related to success in student teaching; the professor's "general

assessment of potential for teaching" was significantly related to the grade in student teaching but accounted for only a small portion of the variance in student teaching grade.

Two of the studies should perhaps be mentioned in a little more detail. Twa (1978) in a study designed to develop selection criteria for admission to the Faculty of Education, developed equations for predicting success in student teaching. He found 1) that to be accurate in predicting grade in student teaching, the predictors must include psychological and personality test results as well as biographical data, and 2) that the more specific one becomes in specifying the sex of the student teacher, and the subject and grade level taught, the more accurate the prediction of the student teaching grade. Greene and Dravland (1979) in a study to determine relationships between success in the education program and success in the teaching profession, discovered, among other findings, that professors were able to predict teaching success with some degree of accuracy but that specific variables within the student teaching practicum were generally not related to teaching success as measured by principals' evaluations.

Current Research

At present there are four major research projects being conducted within the framework of QAULTEP. The Thorlacius study on Clinical Supervision focuses on how to select and train better teacher supervisors, who through improved supervisory techniques and behaviours will in turn help to prepare more effective teachers. The Sovka-Percevault study utilizes data originating in the first four categories. The orientation of this project is toward examining the changes that take place in students as they progress through the education practica and the fourth year of the teacher education program. The hypothesis is that students'

concerns will shift from those of an egocentric nature through curricular-type concerns and finally to professional concerns. A third study is a replication and validation of the findings in the previous research on the selection of teacher candidates. The data from Population III is being used to validate the equations derived from Population II data. The fourth study is directed toward gathering information from graduating fourth year students concerning their professional plans (job placement preferences) and their opinions on various aspects of the teacher education program. It will serve partly as a basis for analyzing future data within the "placement" category of QAULTEP.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Of the four research projects currently underway, three have assumed the form of longitudinal studies generating multiple opportunities for future research in teacher education. Also, there are plans to refine and continue the study of The University of Lethbridge teaching graduates (Greene and Dravland, 1979). QAULTEP itself has not been assigned any particular finite life-span and could conceivably provide the basis for an almost unlimited number of future research projects. It is currently in the fifth year of what was expected to be about a 15-year project. It appears at this point that whatever final model is adopted, it will incorporate the purposes, objectives and basic assumptions underlying each component of the education program, as well as the criteria and the method of data collection to be used to evaluate each component. QAULTEP will evolve into a model for evaluating teacher education programs when the analyses of data have progressed to the point where the researchers and the education faculty express a requisite degree of confidence in the quality of the data collected and the procedures used for evaluation.

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